C H U R C H N E W S

F R O M T H E N O R T H E R N C O U N T R I E S

Edited by the Northern Ecumenical Institute
Sigtuna, Sweden
Director: Dr. Harry Johansson, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. Johs. Langhoff, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 18 June 30th, 1956.

Many Northern Meetings and Conferences.

During the summer months a number of joint Northern meetings and conferences in various spheres of religious work are being held. Thus, a meeting for representatives of the Christian daily press in the Northern countries took place last month in Copenhagen. Such a meeting is held once a year and is characterized by an exchange of experiences and inspiration, both as regards editorial questions as well as in matters of management.

Likewise, the third Northern film instruction course for clergymen was conducted recently in Copenhagen at which professional film experts gave instruction in camera work and the drawing up of a working plan for a narrative film of action. Backing up the course were a number of mission societies and youth organizations, and the information was given that the two previous courses had already resulted in better films from the mission fields, something which may be of great importance for the contact between the work for foreign missions at home and abroad.

150 representatives of the "Small Churches"-movements in the Northern countries have been assembled in Copenhagen to discuss the erection of new churches in the big cities and, in this connection, the co-operation between the voluntary religious movements and the state authorities.

Around July 1 a Northern Sunday School congress with 6-700 participants will be held in Copenhagen. Bishop H. Fuglsang-Damgaard is to be President of the congress and a number of speakers will deliver addresses on topical subjects in relation to the work of the Sunday Schools.

In the beginning of August the Northern Conference for Clergymen will take place in Iceland (see C.N. no. 17) and in the middle of September clergymen's wives from all the Northern countries will meet at Nyborg.Strand in Denmark for the sixth

Northern Conference for Clergymen's Wives.

Northern Participation in German Evangelical Church Rally.

Ever since the first German Evangelical Church Rally in Essen in 1950 clergymen from the Northern countries have shared in the unique experience which these Church Rallies are. This year the Evangelical Church Rally will be held in Frankfurt am Main from August 8 - 12 and some of the Northern countries are preparing a bigger and organized participation. The Church of Denmark Council on Inter-Church Relations is responsible for the arrangements in Denmark. In Norway the Christian daily, "Vårt Land", has taken the initiative of arranging a joint tour to Frankfurt.

D E N M A R K .

Commentary on Intercommunion with Anglican Church.

Bishop H. Fuglsang-Damgaard, D.D., Copenhagen, in a statement in the monthly broadcast in the Danish radio called "Church Magazine", commented on the agreement about intercommunion between the Danish Lutheran Church and the Church of England (see C.N. no. 17). The Bishop described the agreement as a historical event of immense importance. It does not mean that the two Churches have abandoned their respective doctrines concerning Holy Communion, it was emphasized, but the fact that Christian brethren from different Churches may meet at the Communion Table is the best possible basis for a really fruitful discussion on the divergent conceptions of communion. To the question whether the closer connection between the Danish and the Anglican Churches has been endangered by the introduction of women clergy in the Danish National Church, the Bishop answered:

"At a certain time it might have seemed as if the question of women clergy could become an obstacle in the way of a closer co-operation between the two Churches. Fortunately, it has not proved a hindrance for intercommunion".

Suggestion for Joint Working Committees in the National Church.

"Kirkeligt Centrum", an organization aiming at drawing together the various sections of the Lutheran National Church in Denmark, in a communication to the Danish Bishops suggests the setting up of joint committees, made up of representatives of all Church sections in the various dioceses. The committees should deal with a number of common religious tasks.

The proposal is put forward in reference to the fact that the Church in our times is facing a number of important tasks which can hardly be solved satisfactorily by the individual Church sections or organizations or private persons on their own, nor may be expected to be solved by the Ministry of Church Affairs or by

Parliament, as they are internal Church problems. Among the many spheres of activity mentioned in the proposal as possible working fields of the suggested diocesan committees are the evangelization of the Church, taken in its widest sense; the rationalization of religious efforts in the individual parishes; the preparation for Confirmation; the relations to the press, the radio, and television; the further training of clergymen; the setting up of new offices in the National Church, such as special ministers for young people, factory ministers, and women parish workers; observation of new forms for religious work abroad, and the procurement of short impartial statements on important questions.

The proposal has aroused lively interest in wide circles, but has been met with suspicion by several representatives of Grundtvigianism (the Church section based on the inspiration by N.F.S. Grundtvig) because they are afraid that such diocesan working committees will act as forerunners for a real Church Constitution with an independent Church synod, which they do not want. That this should be the purpose of the proposal is, however, being denied by the originators.

"Kristeligt Dagblad" in Copenhagen has received the suggestion with satisfaction and hopes for an appreciative reception and an unbiased criticism with a positive intention. The proposal will be discussed by the Bishops at their meeting in September.

Lively Debate on New Abortion Bill.

Seldom has there been such a passionate debate in the Danish Parliament as the one last month when a bill on new rules for induced abortion was introduced. The Bill, which is based on the deliberations over two years by a Parliamentary comission, was introduced by the Minister of Justice and of Social Affairs and constitutes a step in the direction of making social indication sufficient reason for legally induced abortion. The Bill contains a clause stating that an abortion may be induced when the woman concerned, on account of serious physical or psychical sufferings, may be deemed "not so well fit for taking care of the child" and also mentions "the conditions under which the woman lives" as a basis for considerations in regard to the justification of an induced abortion.

According to the Bill a number of committees consisting of three members - a representative of the institution "Mødrehjælpen" ("Help for Mothers"), a physician who is a specialist in psychiatry, and one other physician, are to decide in the individual cases. The composition of these committees has been a matter of lively discussion. 19 of the 20 leading gynaecologists in Denmark have protested publicly against having to perform an operation without themselves having come to a previous personal decision in this direction, and a minority in Parliament is backing up this protest.

The question of the latest permissible time for such an operation - apart from purely medical and eugenical cases - has, moreover, caused heated debates. The present Act of Parliament in force puts the limit at 3 months after the commencement of pregnancy, but the Minister of Justice had proposed to change this to the 20th week of pregnancy and later on changed it once more again to the 16th week. A minority wish to retain the present time limit.

At the third and last Reading in Parliament the Minority, counting among its supporters a number of positively inclined Christian Members, succeeded in having the final passing of the Bill postponed until further debates have taken place.

"Israel Inside and Outside the Church".

On the initiative of the International Committee for the Mission to Israel under the International Missionary Council an international course on the Missions to Israel will be conducted in Haslev from August 1 - 10 under the motto "Israel Inside and Outside the Church". Such a course has been held every second year since the War. At the meeting a number of Biblical and topical problems will be dealt with in a series of addresses in the mornings, while the afternoons will be reserved for discussions. Among the many speakers from a number of countries attention will be drawn to two orthodox Jews, i.e. the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish congregation in Denmark, Dr. Marcus Melchior, who will speak on "The People of Israel from a Jewish Point of View", and the Chief Rabbi of Karlsruhe, Germany, Dr. R. Geis, whose subject will be "The Religious Year in the Jewish Home".

Gospel of St. Luke in Magazine Format.

The Danish Bible Society will shortly publish a large edition, at a very moderate price, of the Gospel according to St. Luke in magazine format. The idea is to make one of the easiest accessible Gospels a matter of popular reading and to this end the Edition will, among other things, be illustrated with many photographs from Palestine.

Company of Actors Give Religious Performances in Churches.

The former Rector of the Helligaands Church in Copenhagen, the Rev. H. Helweg, is the originatior of a new undertaking in Danish Church life. He has assembled a company of some 20 people, actors, instructors, and technicians, who travel the country and give performances of religious plays in the churches in their spare time.

Rev. Halfdan Helweg, himself the author of seven different Church plays, has already several times been out with his company and as a rule the Church plays gather full houses and awaken great

interest. In an interview with the evening paper, "Information", about the religious play as a form for Church activity Rev. H. Helweg says, among other things:

"There is a growing understanding that it is possible through religious plays to come into contact with modern man in a more direct way than through Church services which are on such an exclusively religious and dogmatic level that they do not appeal to people. At the moment the Church is passing through a great experimental period. New forms are being tried out, new ways and means being sought. The religious play is perhaps one of these new forms searched for. Modern people have been trained by the cinemas to receive their experiences in dramatic form, they are used to seeing pictures. The Church plays meet the need of modern man in this respect".

Religious Retreat at Løgumkloster.

A group of religiously and nationally interested people, representing many different categories of the nation, has taken the initiative to create a Christian religious refuge at Løgumkloster, a small town near the Danisch-German frontier. The Refuge, or Retreat, is to be a place where people may stay for a shorter or longer period in order to find relaxation and quietness as well as to obtain spiritual inspiration, but at the same time the Institution is to be the setting for an extensive programme of courses and meetings. A still existing wing of the old mediaeval monastery at Løgumkloster is to be equipped with rooms for devotions an assembly hall, a library, and such like, and the whole Institution will be in intimate connection with the beautiful old church. A Director will lead the daily morning and evening devotions, give a few lectures and Bible study classes, and be in charge of discussions on subjects suggested by the guests at the Retreat.

Uptil now almost half the sum required for the realization of the plans has been collected by a committee representing all sections of the Danish National Church, and "Kirkelig Forening for Indre Mission" ("Home Mission") has undertaken to be financially responsible for the running of the Institution, once the buildings have been completed.

F I N L A N D.

Church to Establish Contact with Cultural Life.

The Enlarged Bishops' Conference, which is the Governing Body of the Lutheran National Church in Finland, at its recent meeting in Helsinki (Helsingfors) appointed a special committee to deal with cultural matters. The decision was taken at the suggestion of Bishop Eino Sormunen, Kuopio, who wished to establish and maintain contact between the Church and various financial,

social, and intellectual circles through the medium of such a committee. The Bishop himself was elected Chairman of the Committee while the Director of the Congregational Institute at Järvenpää Dr. Aarne Siirala was made Secretary.

Furthermore, a commission for family affairs was set up by the Enlarged Bishops' Conference to take charge of and to supervise the Church's consultative agency on matrimonial and family matters. Chairman of this commission was Bishop M. Simojoki.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Bishops' Conference appointed the present Secretary of the Church Executive Committee, Mauno Saloheimo, as Director of the Financial Administration of the Church (the Central Fund). The present Director, Paavo Kaarna, has resigned on account of age and failing health.

Remarkable Roman Catholic Lecture.

The leader of "Studium Catholicum" in Helsinki (Helsingfors), the Dominican Friar André Bonduelle, gave a remarkable lecture entitled "What Has the Roman Catholic Church to Give the Lutheran Church?" in the Finnish Evangelical-Lutheran Brotherhood in Helsinki (Helsingfors). The Friar said, among other things:

"To bridge the chasm between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches is difficult. The forms of confession are so different. The 400 years during which these Churches have lived apart from each other have created quite different religious mentalities. The Roman Catholics feel that Martin Luther rejected essential points of the Christian message and the Protestants maintain that the Catholics have made their human additions true Words of God. None of us feel that we have anything to learn from the other".

Friar Bonduelle admitted that misuse has taken place in the Roman Catholic Church, both at the time of Luther and also later on, but added, "We believe in the continued existence of the Church; we believe that the Church still acts through Faith and Grace. We consider it a matter of honour to study the works of the Fathers and during the past 20 years a kind of renaissance may be said to have taken place also in this respect".

The poor attendance in church on Sundays in the Protestant Churches, especially in the Northern countries, was described by Friar Bonduelle as being something very surprising to Roman Catholics. In Stockholm only 1% of the population goes to church, while in Paris, for instance, the churches are filled 3-5 times on Sundays. The speaker admitted that the direct contact with God possibly is of greater importance, but at the same time he stressed the value of the firmer and stricter discipline of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to church attendance. The Roman Catholic Church emphasizes more clearly the value and the importance of Church services. Nothing promotes the growth of the spiritual

life of the individual more than the feeling of living in a Christian fellowship, in a Christian atmosphere. It is particularly on this back-ground that we must see the importance of making man as a spiritual and corporal unity a participant in the Christian Church service life.

After the lecture there was lively discussion, in the course of which it was emphasized by Finnish clergymen that the Pope recognizes baptism, marriages, and communion performed by Protestant ministers, so that there can be no talk of schism in the serious sense of the word often adopted by Roman Catholics.

In this connection it may be noted that the French Dominicans, working with "Studium Catholicum" as their head-quarters have started the publication of a quarterly called "Documenta", giving the views of the Roman Catholic Church on topical questions in present times.

The Church Must Plead for the Oppressed.

At the re-consecration of the church in Kallio, in one of the workers' districts in Helsinki (Helsingfors) Bishop Elis Gulin, Tampere (Tammerfors), stated, among other things:

"The Church as such must not take part in the activities of any single political party, and neither ought a Church minister do so. But the Church must always plead the case of the oppressed and less well off if it wants to be the Church of Jesus Christ. What a false reflection the Church will be, if, instead, it turns into a fortress in which to seek refuge in order only to defend from there already established privileges."

Finland's Army Bishop Retires.

The Finnish Army Bishop, Johannes Björklund, has resigned his office in the Army on account of age. His successor has not yet been appointed and the Enlarged Bishops' Conference has set up a committee which may possibly put forward suggestions for certain changes in the service of an army bishop before such an appointment takes place.

There are, for that matter, at the moment no less than 7 army chaplaincies vacant for the prosaic reason that an army chaplain is paid less than an ordinary Church minister.

Representatives to Minneapolis Nominated.

Representatives of the Finnish Lutheran National Church to take part in the Lutheran World Conference at Minneapolis in August next year have now been appointed. They will be Bishop Martti Simojoki, Professor Osmo Tiililä, Professor W.A. Schmidt, Lieutenant-General Kai Savonjousi, Barrister-at-law Edvin Törmälä, Dr. Eira Paunu, D.D., Dr. Inger Tiililä, Dean K.E. Rinne, and Rev. Samuel Lehtonen and Rev. Niilo Suhonen.

"Day of the fallen soldiers" in Porkkala District.

Also this year Whitsunday was observed as the "Day of the fallen soldiers". This was also the case in the Porkkala district which Finland, as is well known, received back from the Soviet Union recently. At the two churches in Kyrkslätt and Degerby the white marble memorial slabs which were removed from the church yards in 1944 had been brought back and put in their proper places. Thousands of people took part in the solemn ceremonies at the two churches, and thus bore witness to the fact the inhabitants of Porkkala had not forgotten those fallen in the War in spite of 11 years of "exile".

As it is, it has become evident, now the snows have melted, that rather extensive destruction has been wrought in the church yards during the Russian period so that hard work is at head to put them in order again.

Notes.

The American revivalist preacher, Tommy Hicks, is now expected in Finland for the third time. Last year, and again in February this year, he spoke in Helsinki (Helsingfors), and now from July 14 - 19 he is to speak at mass meetings in Turku (Åbo) after which he will start on a preaching tour in the country.

The organization "Friends of the Needy" in co-operation with the night missionary, Arvid von Martens, have now completed the erection of a building with accomodation for 90 homeless men in Helsinki. The place has been made as comfortable and home-like as possible in order to serve as the best possible setting for the work among the home-less.

I C E L A N D .

Northern Jubilee Gifts for the Icelandic Church.

On the occasion of the 900 years' anniversary of the establishment of the first see in Iceland gift tokens for four church bells for the new church in Skalholt, the foundation stone of which is to be laid on the Day of Anniversary, will be presented in the course of the celebrations in Reykjavik and Skalholt. The bells are the gifts of the Norwegian, the Finnish, and the Swedish Lutheran National Churches and of the Swedish Clergymen's Association. The official Norwegian representatives at the festival will be Bishop Johannes Smemo, Oslo, and Mr. Kristian Hansson, Director of the Ministry of Church Affairs. The Finnish Archbishop, Ilmari Salomies, will represent the Finnish Church.

The first church in Skalholt was built by Gizur Hviti shortly after year 1000 when Christianity had been introduced by the Alting (Parliament) as the official religion of the country.

The church was later enlarged and decorated as a Cathedral with wood from Norway and church bells and glass windows from other countries. Several times during the following centuries the church burnt down and was re-built, but when the see and the theological school were moved to Reykjavik in 1785, the church was pulled down and much of the valuable old furniture disappeared. Now only the old pulpit, a baptismal font of wood, a bronze chandelier, a very old chasuble, and a chalice from around year 1300 are preserved.

A special Skalholt Association has worked for the re-erection of the church on the old site, so rich in memories. For the time being this goal of the Association will now be reached.

N O R W A Y .

Extended Co-Operation between Church and Athletics.

The diocese of Tunsberg in Norway is leading the way in respect of co-operation between the Church and Athletics. Recently the third contact-conference was held at Norefjell between representatives from the Church and the athletic associations. Among others, Bishop Bjarne Skard and the President of the Norwegian Athletic League, Arthur Ruud, took part in this conference. A communiqué was issued from the conference, which was very successful, stating that the mutual conversations had been of great value in as much as "it is the aim of athletics to give the young people a strong body and a healthy mind, the aim of the Church to give them a firm foundation to stand on and a vision of the eternal values". In acknowledgement of the fact that neither the Church nor Athletics on their own are able to achieve these goals, the communiqué stresses the necessity of a co-operation between them which has already been successfully begun, but must be further extended.

The President of the Norwegian Athletic League in an interview with the Christian daily in Oslo, "Vårt Land", expresses his great joy at the contact now established, but feels that still more could be done on the part of the Church to promote a positive relationship. He says about this:

"Athletics are often met with opposition from circles with a strong religious life. It is, for instance, difficult to obtain grants for the starting of children's activities and such like. A positive attitude on the part of the Church would help, as, for instance, if the Bishops' Conference or other responsible parties sent out an appeal for greater open-mindedness with regard to body-building exercises. Besides, it is my opinion that the clergymen should join the athletes in body-building activities. The Church must realize, of course, that the children's section of an athletic club cannot be transformed into a Sunday school or the junior section into a Christian young people's association. But they ought to take part in the activities - bring their tape

measure and a stop watch and come - and then by their good example awaken interest for higher values".

Women to Be on Equal Footing With Men About Clerical Appointments.

After the Passing of a Bill in Parliament the Government may now freely appoint women clergy to offices in the Norwegian Lutheran National Church. With a great majority the Storting (Parliament) abolished the Act of 1938, according to which women might not be appointed in cases where the parochial Church council concerned did not want it. The Amendment was first passed by the Odelsting (Lower House) where only 24 of the 100 members voted against it, and later by the Lagting (Upper House).

The Bill proposing to abolish the Act was introduced by the Government in order to make it possible for Norway to ratify the Conventions on Human Rights which demand full equality between man and woman.

The debate in the Odelsting, lasting for five hours, did not concern the principle as such about women clergy, in as much as the Act of 1938 in principle gave access for women to hold ecclesiastical offices, but the Opposition maintained that the Bill represented an encroachment on the rights of the Church. It pointed out that the State ought not to be able to inflict a woman minister on a congregation who believes that it is against the Word of God.

The parochial Church councils have the right to nominate three candidates among the applicants to a vacant ecclesiastical office, but the Ministry of Church Affairs is at liberty to appoint anyone of the applicants. It is customary, however, to follow the nomination by either the parochial council or the bishop. Simultaneously with the Passing of the Bill, the Storting also passed a resolution requesting the Government to investigate the question of wider internal self-government of the Church with regard to the appointment of clergymen.

At the division all the representatives of the Christian People's Party voted against the Amendment while several clergymen in the Storting, elected by other Parties, were in favour.

The decision was not occasioned by any special case, in so far as none of the 35 women theologians in Norway is known to either desire or have any intention of applying for an ecclesiastical office.

In commentaries by Church leaders after the Passing of the Bill the point is stressed by several of them that religious considerations seem to have played no part in the matter. The Rector of the Free Theological Faculty, Rev. Carl Fr. Wisløff, emphasizes that the result "reminds us very emphatically that we have a State Church and the love of this State Church arrangement has not been increased by it".

Dispute About Morning Devotions at Teachers' Colleges.

For several years the Norwegian Storting (Parliament) has debated a new proposal for regulations for the teachers' colleges and the members of the committee working on this question are in disagreement on the principle of obligatory morning devotions at the colleges.

In the old regulations there was a rule that each day should begin with a short devotional service or the singing of hymns, but now a majority of the committee advocates that this rule should be abolished while the minority wish to keep it on.

In the elementary schools it is decided by a law that the day should begin with prayers, and it is pointed out by Church-people that if the teachers in their future work are to lead such morning prayers every day it must also be a natural thing to practice this custom at the teachers' colleges.

The Christian daily in Oslo, "Vårt Land", comments that, of course, this is no vital matter as long as the School as a whole retains its fundamental Character of a Christian School, but that the peculiar fear that we should hear too much about God is sadly typical of our times.

Morover, the paper draws attention to the fact that although the teachers' colleges during the past few years have been able to drop morning devotions on the plea that they are not mentioned in the draft regulations which the colleges might adopt on trial, all of them have, never the less, kept the morning prayers as something natural.

Religious Festival Week in Oslo Next Easter?

It now appears as if the idea of arranging a religious week of celebrations in Oslo next Easter (see C.N. No. 16) will become a reality. The National Tourist Association recently invited a number of representatives of the various religious and Church institutions to a meeting in order to discuss the plan which includes a huge open air religious service on Easter morning, common to all denominations, as well as sacred concerts, films, theatre performances, and religious exhibitions. A working committee has been set up to make further preparations and to try to carry out the plan during Easter week next spring for the first time.

S W E D E N .

Feeling of Emptiness in the Welfare State Leads to Superstition.

Dr. Manfred Björkquist, the former Bishop of Stockholm, who is also the one who took the initiative for the establishment of the Swedish Church work centre, the Sigtuna Foundation, in an interview published by a number of Northern newspapers gives an

analysis of the present spiritual situation and of the responsibilities of the Church to-day. The Bishop mentions the spiritual needs of the man of the masses in a modern city which, in spite of everything, still exist, and continues:

"Man feels like a ghost. The more he is dressed up, fed, trimmed, and has all the stones on his path removed for him, the more ghost-like does his existence become. When all wants are met and nothing apparently is lacking in complete happiness, then only does the horror become most smothering. Just this: to have everything - except something to use it for, to have everything without any responsibility towards a reality above the dead mechanical functions of things - that is the most terrible experience of man. To-day this experience is awaiting more and more sections in our nation. The very evolution of our time, the greatest triumph of the materialistic Godlessness, will become its most terrible schoolmaster to Christ".

Bishop Björkquist is of the opinion that out of the feeling of emptiness in the Welfare State a new superstition will grow up which will not only be concerned with the golden calf and its offshoots. He says about this:

"All sorts of systems of ideological and mystical character will woo the ghost world of collectivism. When the personality in our social structure disintegrates it should not cause surprise that it will be the impersonal religiousness which will overflow the parched fields. The religions of the Far East are undoubtedly in the offensive. It is a very telling fate that in and by the very same process by which we try to keep the East at arm's length we are preparing the soil, quite literally and bodily, for its deepest source of inspiration: its impersonality and its mystery-religiousness. I foresee a struggle of life and death for the personality, the personal existence, both in the human and the Christian senses of the word. At that time we shall also come to understand that it is a utopian thought to attempt to preserve a personal existence in the human sense of the word without a personal relation to Jesus Christ, the personal God".

The Bishop concludes by emphasizing that the Church must try to come into contact with the individual through the particular collevtive sphere of which he is part. Only thus may the individual be set free to accept a personal responsibility for his own life within the boundaries of the co-operation.

Loan Fund for Building of Churches.

The twenty-fifth Church Assembly of the Swedish Lutheran National Church was held recently in Stockholm, attended by 2710 delegates from the parishes. At the Assembly it was decided, among other things, to set up a Loan Fund, to which the means were to be found through collections in the churches, to be used for the erection of churches in the speedily growing towns.

This venture may be taken as an expression of the realization by the Church that it must seek to promote the building of churches as much as possible through voluntary efforts, since it has become evident on several occasions that the civic authorities, who have the decisive power in regard to church building, have shown a remarkable inertness.

Bishop Torsten Ysander, Linköping, was the leader of the Assembly on behalf of Archbishop Brilioth, who was absent because of illness, and in his welcoming address he said, among other things:

"The task of the Assembly this year is to consider the labouring Church. At a time when a huge movement of the masses from country to town is taking place the Church must also be on the move. But if the Church is to have any hope of executing its duties it is necessary that the laity is also aware of its responsibility".

The Swedish Royal Couple was present at the opening meeting of the Assembly.

Cathedral Chapter of Stockholm Criticizes State's Relations to Church

In a declaration dealing with the relation between the Church and the State, the Cathedral Chapter of Stockholm, which is the highest ecclesiastical authority in the diocese of Stockholm, criticizes very strongly the policy of the Ministry of Church Affairs, and of the State authorities on the whole, regarding Church matters. According to the ecclesiastical legislation the Ministry of Church Affairs is responsible for the welfare of the Church, but the Cathedral Chapter declares that, although the State authorities are not directly hostile to the Church, they have, never the less, at several points proved indifferent and negligent in regard to the welfare of the Church. "The attitude of the Government and Parliament towards the Church during the past few years", it says in the declaration, "has been characterized by a lack of good-will and generosity which is un-paralleled in other matters". In this connection attention is drawn to the abolition of clerical livings, contrary to the clearly expressed wishes of the Church authorities (see C.N. No. 17) and the failing to create an effective organization for religious activities in the speedily growing housing areas.

"If things continue in this way", the Cathedral Chapter concludes, "then it must be seriously considered whether to make a radical change in regard to the relation between the Church and the State".

Gustav Nyström on Impressions of China.

The former Swedish missionary in China, Gustav Nyström, on his return from a six weeks' journey in that country (see C.N. No. 16) has published a number of articles in the weekly magazine

of the Mission Covenant Church, "Svensk Veckotidning", giving his impressions from the journey. Nyström is the first former missionary in China to visit the country again after the new Rule has come into power. Like the representative of the World Council of Churches, Bishop Rajah B. Manikam, he took part in the big Church conference in Peking. In connection with his report on this conference he rejects the allegation advanced by other quarters that the various Church denominations were compelled to form a unified Church. The 70 Church communities still have their own organizations and their special characteristics, but the conference in Peking was convened by a joint committee for co-operation whose purpose it is to help the Christian groups to greater unity and to become independent Chinese Churches.

Gustav Nyström had the opportunity of visiting the former Swedish mission field around Wuchang and found here that none of the Chinese ministers or evangelists who had worked in connection with the Swedish mission had been either imprisoned or killed. He spoke with a number of Chinese Churchmen, whom he knew from former days, and had the impression that they were well content with the working conditions of the Church. With regard to daily life he noted a tendency towards a higher standard of living, even though there was a certain amount of rationing and also unemployment in some places.

Two of the theological schools, which are joint institutions for 11 Churches, were also visited by Gustav Nyström, i.e. the colleges in Peking and Nanking. He reports that all teaching is common to the various denominations except for Dogmatics, Liturgy, and similar subjects, where each Church is responsible for its special instruction. Apparently there is no shortage of new theological students. Thus, there had been 180 applicants for theological training at the Anglican Church, although only 30 were needed.

During his stay in China, Gustav Nyström had the opportunity of meeting the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chou-en-Lai, whom he also met last year when he was in China as interpreter for the Secretary-General of the U.N., Dag Hammarskjöld. In a lecture in Stockholm the former missionary refers to a statement by Chou-en-Lai regarding religious liberty in China in this way:

"The Constitution guarantees religious freedom of confession. But when the economic standard becomes sufficiently high, people will not need religion any longer".

Mr. Nyström stresses the fact that in his opinion there will never be any question of mission work in China in the same way as previously. The Christians in China wish to be considered the Church of China and want to be in charge of the evangelization work themselves. But they want to have fellowship with the Churches in other countries, and Gustav Nyström calls upon the Churches to establish contact with the Christians in China in the widest possible manner and to strengthen them by prayers of intercession.